

The experience of WRA officials who have interviewed Japanese Americans on matters relating to loyalty, and who have studied the results of the interviews, has indicated that, instead of being dishonest and secretive, they are surprisingly frank and naive. Information obtained from them regarding visits to Japan, dual citizenship, and former employment, tallied almost in every instance with information collected by the F.B.I. and Army and Navy intelligence agencies.

14. Myth: The birth rate of the Japanese in America is much higher than that of other Americans. They multiply at an alarming rate.

Fact: The U.S. Census, 1940, shows that the birth rate among Japanese Americans in every state on the West Coast was lower than the birth rate of the general population, including people of all ancestries.

	Birth rate among Japanese Americans	Birth rate of total population, all ancestries.
California.....	15.8 per thousand.....	16.1 per thousand
Oregon.....	15.5 per thousand.....	16.4 per thousand
Washington.....	11.7 per thousand.....	16.2 per thousand

Census figures show, further, that the number of Japanese American births has been decreasing steadily since 1920.

	Number of births in 1920	Number of births in 1930	Number of births in 1940
California.....	5,032	2,224.....	1,480
Oregon.....	219	75.....	63
Washington.....	1,160	375.....	171

"Their birth rate during the past decade has been insufficient to balance mortality and emigration." (Tolan Fourth Interim Report, p. 91.)

15. Myth: The Japanese cannot be Americanized or assimilated into American life. They congregate in "Little Tokyos" to preserve their Japanese culture.

Fact: "To the extent that assimilation is a problem, it is largely the result of certain social conditions and laws of the American general public. Studies demonstrate that persons of Japanese descent are readily susceptible to integration in our society if given the opportunity." (U.S. Supreme Court Justice Murphy, in Korematsu vs. the United States, p. 18.)

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"The word 'assimilation' has two meanings," as David Starr Jordan, President of Stanford University, pointed out at the hearings of the U. S. Immigration Committee in 1924--"interbreeding and the

comprehension of political and social conditions." There has been very little intermarriage between the Japanese and Caucasians in the western states; as a matter of fact, in three of the states where they were mainly concentrated (Arizona, California, and Washington), it has been prohibited by law. In the "comprehension of political and social conditions," however, Dr. Jordan stated that "the young Japanese are more readily assimilated than people of several European races." (Hearings before the Immigration Committee, U. S. Senate, 68th Congress, First Session, p. 60.)

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This point of view had been strongly supported, some years earlier, by the Immigration Commission appointed in 1907 to "make full inquiry, examination, and investigation...into the subject of immigration." Composed of three senators, three representatives, and three laymen appointed by the President, the Commission published its findings in 42 volumes. Volume 25, published in 1911, is entitled, Japanese and Other Immigrant Races in the Pacific Coast and Rocky Mountain States.

"...When compared with other races employed in similar kinds of labor in the same industry," the report stated (p. 149), "the Japanese show relatively rapid progress in acquiring a speaking knowledge of English. Their advance has been much more rapid than that of the Chinese and Mexicans, who show little interest in 'American' institutions. During their first five years of residence a greater proportion have learned to speak English than most of the South and East European races... The progress of the Japanese is due to their great eagerness to learn, which has overcome more obstacles than have been encountered by most of the other races, obstacles of race prejudice, of segregation, and of wide differences in language."

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More recent confirmation of the same viewpoint is contained in Dr. Edward K. Strong's book, entitled "The Second-Generation Japanese Problem", based on an extensive study of the subject under a \$40,000 grant from the Carnegie Corporation. This book was published in 1934.

"Perusal of the literature indicates," Dr. Strong says (p. 27) "that few recognized authorities on either side (of the Japanese controversy) would deny that second- and certainly third-generation Japanese lack the mental qualities necessary for cultural assimilation. The question does not apply to the first generation, for cultural assimilation is never accomplished by any first generation."

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Many other immigrant people, limited in ability to speak the English language, have congregated in separate communities. New York, Cleveland, Detroit, Chicago, and other cities have had -- and still have, to some extent -- colonies of Italians, Poles, Russians, and other nationalities. The midwest has had its rural settlements of Scandinavians and Germans. They gathered together to have neighbors whose language and customs they understood, and for economic reasons. These reasons, also influenced the colonization of the Japanese, who were frequently not welcomed in other communities.

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"Segregation of immigrants is certainly not peculiar to the Japanese, but is a rule of immigrant settlement....Where colour is added to culture as a distinguishing characteristic of the newcomer, it provides a further incentive for the members of the group to segregate and to act as a unit." (The Japanese Canadians, by Young and Reid, p. 24)

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At the time of the evacuation, in 1942, the "Little Tokyos" on the West Coast were already on the wane. According to Carey McWilliams (Prejudice, p. 88), "As the Nisei reached maturity, there was a significant trend away from Little Tokyo. In 1928 one observer reported that, in Los Angeles, there were 203 Japanese-operated fruit stands, 292 grocery stores, 74 florist shops, 69 nurseries, 108 restaurants, and 68 dry-cleaning establishments which had most of their dealings with non-Japanese customers. Over a period of years there was unquestionably a slow but steady expansion out of Little Tokyo."

A similar trend was noted by Young and Reid (The Japanese Canadians, p. 72) in a careful study conducted in British Columbia. In Vancouver, the authors state, "the Japanese are found in commercial enterprises in significant numbers not only in their own areas of settlement where, incidentally, they cater to Whites as well as Japanese, but also to a remarkable extent all over the city where their only customers are whites."

Another statement in the same book (p. 145), which was published in 1938 "under the auspices of The Canadian National Committee for Mental Hygiene and The Canadian Institute of International Affairs", is unquestionably as true of the conditions that prevailed on the West Coast of the United States as it was of the conditions in British Columbia: "The second generation of the Japanese Canadians, in spite of what their critics may say to the contrary and in spite of what their parents may do to have it otherwise, are no more Japanese than their parents are Canadian. They live in our houses, wear our clothes, eat our food, attend our schools, speak our language, read our books, join our churches, go to our movies, play our sports, sing our songs, and salute our flags. Since they do these things, and since they are human and therefore are affected by the experience, it is a denial of the obvious to ignore the fact that they are in the process of becoming Canadian."

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Competent observers on the reception of Nisei in Japan have remarked on their lack of welcome there, and on their failure to adjust themselves to Oriental life. (See The Rising Sun of Japan, by Randau and Zugsmith, p.99-100; The Japanese Canadians, p. 146.)

The Americanization of the Nisei is especially evident in their school achievements. They are eager for education.

"Although they come from an economic level appreciably lower than that of the white American students, a much higher percentage of them attend the universities and colleges." (Christendom, Vol. VII, No. 2, 1942, p. 201.)

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"The Japanese immigrants...take advantage of the opportunities presented by educational institutions to an extent probably unsurpassed by any other immigrant group..." (The Japanese Canadians, p. 132.)

Many of them have won good citizenship awards, scholarships, and other scholastic honors; they have been elected to class offices and important positions in the student bodies; they have starred in American sports. (See Brief of Japanese American Citizens League, Korematsu Case, pp. 161, 162, 163, 164.) Many have achieved high recognition in the arts and sciences.

The final and most conclusive proof, however, is the remarkable record of the 442nd Regimental Combat Team, which rescued the "Lost Battalion" in France, and has set a record of gallantry unsurpassed by any other unit in the Army of the United States. (See Nisci in Uniform.)

16. Myth: The presence of Japanese workers in any community lowers the standard of living, since they work for lower wages and are content to live in hovels.

Fact: The living standard of any people, regardless of race or ancestry, is determined, in a large measure, by their opportunities to make a decent living. The Fourth Interim Report of the Tolan Committee (pp. 62 to 72) clearly shows that the Japanese in California were constantly striving to overcome the many handicaps that forced them, when they first arrived as immigrants, to accept low wages or starve. "Very few Japanese were employed as skilled workers in factories or workshops; there was a plentiful supply of other immigrants to fill such positions; their inability to understand English required their working in groups under an interpreter; they were opposed by labor unions...Most of the Japanese who did not become domestics worked in the railroads, in canneries, lumber mills, mines, farms, and various city trades." After 1909, however, the number of Japanese in nomadic, low-paying employment began to decrease, owing to their inclination, the Tolan Report states, "to shift to occupations which offered a less nomadic existence, greater profit, or independent status." (p. 63.) "Many of the Japanese gradually left the industries into which they had originally been dispersed. In search of higher earnings, more satisfactory living conditions, and occupations to which they were better adapted by natural bent and experience, they tended to seek the level which they had enjoyed in their native land." (p. 64.)

Many authoritative references may be cited to show that the West Coast Japanese were constantly striving to raise the wage scale in the industries that employed them:

"...The Japanese club secretaries, camp managers, and bosses became successful bargainers, authorized to speak for the whole body of men they represented, familiar with prevailing wage rates in the region and for the particular crop. Under their direction, through strikes and boycotts, particularly at harvest time, the Japanese were able to secure wage increases until their rates equaled and surpassed those of white workers." (Tolan Report, p. 67.)

"They (the Japanese) have reduced the workday from 12 to 11 hours

and by means of strikes have raised the wages of all races." (Prejudice, p. 93)

As they obtained better incomes which enabled them to acquire a few dollars more than necessary to finance a bare existence, they sought better homes and better opportunities for their children.

"Most of the Japanese families are of course living in homes built for them as tenants or laborers and these are usually no better than those erected elsewhere to serve the same purpose. With land ownership, better homes are built..." (The Japanese Problem in the United States (1915), by H. A. Millies, p. 164.)

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"...As the Japanese got ahead and could afford to do so, he also moderated his habits of excessive toil. If he owned land, he built a little bungalow, gave his children music lessons and planned to send them to college.

"The writer has in his possession two very interesting and contrasting snap-shots which he took in the summer of 1933. One is a rough shack inhabited by a Japanese family at one end and used as a barn at the other, with a vegetable and packing room between. The second picture shows an attractive modern bungalow, which had a well-kept garden and a gold-fish pond, and, behind it, a large well-painted fruit-packing house. The two pictures represent two stages of Japanese development. The first is where they began and the second is where they wish to go." (Orientalism in American Life, by Albert W. Palmer, pp. 55-56.)

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"That the standard of living of the Japanese will at least equal that of the White groups in a comparatively short time is indicated by the rapid progress already made by the Japanese... The remarkable advance of the standard of living of the group since the beginning of the century... is evidenced by the standard of living of the Japanese at the present time... There is conclusive evidence of economic and social progress on the part of the Japanese. (The Japanese Canadians, pp. 79, 80, 81.)

17. Myth: Japanese Americans are mainly stoop laborers and domestic workers.

Fact: The 1940 Census reported 43,691 paid workers of Japanese descent fourteen years of age or older, in California, Oregon, and Washington. There were 8,307 paid farm laborers, who were probably employed, for the most part, in stoop labor jobs in the vegetable and small fruit industries.

The farm operators and managers, who may have been engaged in some stoop labor but who were primarily in the same classification with farmers of other races, numbered 7,001. There were 3,541 domestic workers in the three states.

On the other hand, 5,512 persons were employed in clerical, sales, and kindred occupations. There were 5,491 proprietors, managers, and

officials of business enterprises; 3,517 operatives and kindred workers in various types of industries; and 1,157 professional workers. They were engaged in the manufacture of lumber, furniture, paper, chemicals, petroleum and coal products, leather goods, iron and steel, machinery, and many other articles of commerce. Nearly 5,000 were employed in food and dairy products stores; 1,478 worked at laundering, cleaning, and dyeing; 1,335 worked in hotels and lodging houses.

In other words, census figures show that nearly three-quarters of the paid workers, including both Issei and Nisei, were employed in a wide range of occupations not classified as either farm labor or domestic work.

Immigrants from Japan, before they became adjusted to life in America, were employed almost exclusively as low-grade laborers and menials. As they became acquainted with American ways, however, they sought to improve their economic position. Probably no other group of immigrants, confronted with so many obstacles at the outset, has equaled the progress of the Japanese in adapting themselves to the wide scope of American industry and commerce.

18. Myth: American farmers of European descent can not compete with farmers Japanese descent. Wherever the Japanese congregate, the Caucasian farmers are forced out.

Fact: The Report of the U.S. Immigration Commission, the Tolan Report, and many other authoritative references state that the Japanese Americans engaged mainly in growing crops that were not extensively grown by Caucasian farmers. No real competition could exist under these conditions. There is also plentiful proof that, in those areas where the Japanese Americans were chiefly congregated, they were pioneers in farming virgin land, or land that was not wanted by Caucasian farmers.

"Nearly all of the Japanese farming is of the intensive type, requiring much care and handwork. It is of the kind the market places a premium upon, but which the ordinary American farmer is slow to engage in." (The Japanese Problem in the United States, by Prof. H. A. Millis, pp. 89-90.)

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"There can be no doubt that the extensive leasing by them (the Japanese) about Newcastle and in a few other localities has caused prospective settlers to locate elsewhere, and the white population in some neighborhoods has actually diminished... But it should be noted in this connection that in some communities much of the land leased was reclaimed and reduced to cultivation by Japanese, or was first devoted to intensive farming by them... The instances where the prices realized for crops have been adversely affected as a result of Japanese competition are comparatively few. As a matter of fact, where their acreage has been added to that productively used in the community, it has generally been devoted to growing crops not extensively grown by white farmers." (Report of U.S. Immigration Commission, Part 25, Vol. 1, pp. 86-87.)

"They (the Japanese) were engaged chiefly in raising sugar beets in Utah, Colorado, and Idaho, berries and vegetables in Washington and Oregon, and in California varied intensive crops -- vegetables, berries, deciduous fruits, grapes, melons, and hops. The specialization of Japanese farmers was extreme." (Tolan Committee, Fourth Interim Report, p. 69)

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"The concentration (in the production of vegetables, berries, and small fruits) resulted from a trial-and-error experimentation with other types of agriculture... By 1930, they (the Japanese) had abandoned almost every other type of agriculture. Experience had shown that they could not compete successfully in other types of farming," (Prejudice, by Carey McWilliams, p. 86)

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In the March 1, 1924, issue of The Country Gentleman, the leading article, by Robert Welles Ritchie, discussed the Japanese problem in California, "scrupulously avoiding any controversial bias" according to the author's declaration. This paragraph appears in it:

"The three areas of greatest Japanese concentration then (in 1920), as now, were in the cantaloupe and winter-lettuce fields of the Imperial Valley, in the extreme southeastern part of the state; in the mountain fruit center of Placer County; and in the strawberry fields, and the potato, celery, onion, and asparagus districts roughly embraced in the term, the Delta, which lies in the exact center of the state. Let us be very blunt in this context and say that in the Imperial Valley and the Delta country the Japanese never displaced white men, for white men would not work there; and in the mountain fruit district the Chinese, and after them the Japanese, came in -- after nearly every white man had quit -- and made a go of a crippled industry."

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"No small part of the acreage now controlled by the Japanese in Oregon has been 'taken wild' and reduced to cultivation. This is especially true in the vicinity of Hood River...." (The Japanese Problem in the United States, By H. A. Millis, p. 98.)

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"Much of the land (farmed by the Japanese in Washington) has been taken as left by the timbermen, the stumps removed, and reduced to cultivation by the Japanese tenants. They have done much to develop the agricultural possibilities of these communities -- more undoubtedly than any other race has shown an inclination to do." (Ibid, pp. 91-2.)

19. Myth: The farming methods of the Japanese ruin the soil and cause the land to depreciate in value.

Fact: This charge is denied by Prof. H. A. Millis, whose book, "The Japanese Problem in the United States", is frequently cited as an authoritative study in the Report of the Tolan Committee. Millis states: